

Woodridge, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded a \$2 million grant to the Village of Woodridge in Sullivan County for the construction of a new wastewater plant. Hinchey's office worked closely with village and EPA officials to facilitate the grant, which the EPA administered through a rarely used construction grant program. The EPA had been working with the congressman's office and village officials for nearly two years to review the grant request.

"It is very satisfying to see the work that the village put into obtaining this federal grant pay off," Hinchey said. "The need for a new wastewater treatment facility has been very apparent for a long time, and I am very pleased that these federal funds will enable the village to acquire a new treatment system without burdening local ratepayers with the full cost. The new wastewater facility will better serve the residents and businesses of Woodridge while also protecting the local environment and water quality for the greater area."

In June 2007, Hinchey announced that he secured \$1 million in grant funding for the project through the USDA Rural Development and subsequently worked with the village and EPA officials to obtain the additional federal funding needed to offset the costs of the new facility. The village has also been offered an interest-free loan on the balance of the funding through the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation and has applied for additional assistance through federal economic recovery funding.

The Village of Woodridge is currently under a Consent Order from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to construct a new wastewater treatment facility to replace the current wastewater system that has failed. The current system was constructed with some federal funding in 1982 under the EPA's Innovative/Alternative (I/A) Wastewater Treatment program. The program stipulated that EPA would help to replace the facility in the event that the I/A technology did not function adequately.

The village has been working since July 2005 to design and raise funding for a new facility, which is estimated to cost more than \$8 million. Village officials and engineers worked with the EPA to document the technological failure of the I/A system and provide necessary information to support additional federal funding for the construction of a new system at a new location. The current plant has been deemed beyond repair and has been cited for discharging pollution into the Neversink River, an important trout stream.

Village of Woodridge Mayor Ivan Katz thanked Hinchey for his work, saying, "It's an understatement to say that it would be difficult for a small village like ours to shoulder the full costs of building a new plant, particularly with the economy as bad as it is. The EPA funding and the prior grant award from USDA will greatly lessen the financial strain of bringing a new plant online, and I know that having Congressman Hinchey advocating for us at every step of this process made those grants possible."